

The Director of Central Intelligence

Approved For Release 2004/03/17 : CIA-RDP80M00165A001800040025-5

Executive Registry
77-8186/1

9 August 1977

Dear Herman,

Thank you for forwarding Al Bowen's paper on the security of oil supplies transported by sea. It addresses one aspect of an issue--Soviet interdiction of sea lines of communication--which is of great interest to the Intelligence Community.

We agree that sustained interdiction of the oil lines of communication could assume importance during a prolonged conflict. We also agree with Al Bowen's conclusion that other nations, acting unilaterally, would be unlikely to attempt to disrupt oil shipping and that the Soviet Union probably does not contemplate backing any minor power, such as Cuba, in this type of activity.

We interpret the Okean activity somewhat differently, however. We believe that Okean was more complex than he indicated, and that Soviet surface and air forces would find the interdiction of the Persian Gulf oil route a more difficult military problem than Al Bowen's analysis portrays.

Yours sincerely,



STANSFIELD TURNER

Mr. Herman T. Franssen  
Congressional Research Service  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C. 20540

(EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE Congress)

<b>TRANSMITTAL SLIP</b>		DATE
TO:		
EP ROOM NO.		BUILDING
REMARKS:		
FROM:		DDI/CSS/CPS
ROOM NO. 7F30		EXTENSION [ ]
FORM NO. 241 1 FEB 55		REPLACES FORM 36-8 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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Letter to: Mr. Herman T. Franssen  
Congressional Research Service  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C. 20540

SUBJECT : Comments on Captain Bowen's paper on Security  
of Oil Supplies Transported by Sea

CONCUR:

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Deputy Director for Intelligence

29 JUL 1977

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Distribution:

Orig - Addressee

1 - DCI w/basic; copy of Capt. Bowen's paper; and OSR-prepared  
paper for DCI entitled Comments on Congressional  
Research Paper "Security of Oil Supplies--the  
Sea Route"

1 - DDCI w/basic

✓ - ER w/basic

1 - OLC w/basic

1 - DDI w/basic; OSR comments on Capt. Bowen's paper; OSR-  
prepared paper for DCI use only entitled Comments  
on Congressional Research Paper "Security of Oil  
Supplies--the Sea Route"

1 - OSR - [redacted] w/basic

1 - DDI/CPS/CSS [redacted] w/basic; copy of Capt. Bowen's  
paper; OSR comments on Capt. Bowen's paper; and  
OSR-prepared paper for DCI use only entitled:  
Comments on Congressional Research Paper "Security  
of Oil Supplies--the Sea Route"

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STAT DDI/OSR/ [redacted] (28 Jul 77)



Washington, D.C. 20505

Mr. Herman T. Franssen  
Congressional Research Service  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C. 20540

Dear Herman:

Thank you for forwarding Captain Bowen's paper on the security of oil supplies transported by sea. It addresses one aspect of an issue--Soviet interdiction of sea lines of communication--which is of great interest to the intelligence community.

While my analysts agree that the Soviets are capable of interdiction they do not believe that interdiction is prominent in Soviet planning for a NATO-Warsaw Pact war. This is a period in which, in our view, the Soviet Navy will almost be totally preoccupied with its strategic missions.

Our analysts, like yours, have scrutinized Soviet writings and exercise activity. We have noticed that when the Soviets do discuss interdiction it is in the context of a prolonged general war in Europe and focuses on stopping a military supply effort rather than economic shipping.

We agree with Captain Bowen's conclusion that other nations, acting unilaterally, would be unlikely to attempt to disrupt oil shipping. We would also note that there is no evidence that the Soviet Union contemplates backing any minor power, such as Cuba, in this type of activity.

Sincerely,

STANSFIELD TURNER

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Congressional Research Service

Washington, D.C. 20540

Executive Registry  
77-8186

DOI #2582-77

June 21, 1977

late June 001

1 July

Admiral Stansfield Turner  
Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Stan:

Sometime ago I promised to send you a copy of a chapter on "Security of Oil Supplies - The Sea Route", which is part of a major CRS energy forecast to be released shortly.

A summary report of our study will be available within the next week, and the potential consequences of our findings are rather alarming. The study is being undertaken for the two major energy Committees in the Congress and will probably receive some national attention.

If you are interested, I could give you a briefing on the major findings before or after the summary report will be released.

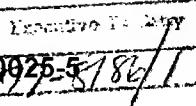
In the meantime, if you have any comments on Captain Alva Bowen's chapter on the security of the supply lines, I would welcome your response.

Sincerely,

Herman T. Franssen  
Analyst in Science and Technology

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28 July 1977

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Comments on Congressional Research Paper  
"Security of Oil Supplies--the Sea Routes"

Summary

1. In this paper, Captain Alva Bowen states that US planners have not accorded sufficient priority to securing oil deliveries from abroad early in a war with the USSR. He notes that the US and its major allies are dependent on foreign oil and that most of these deliveries (some 75 percent) come from the Persian Gulf area. From the outset of a NATO-Warsaw Pact war, Captain Bowen believes that this area would be the scene of an intense effort by the Soviet Union to interdict the flow of oil to the West as part of a new "Battle for the Atlantic." Soviet interdiction forces--reinforced by land-based aircraft from as far away as "Siberia" and by submarines and surface ships from the Pacific and, possibly, the Black Sea Fleets--would constitute a formidable force along the Persian Gulf oil route, especially since the eastern Mediterranean, in his judgment, would be inhospitable for Western forces in the early stages of a war.

2. Much of the underpinning for this thesis is Captain Bowen's interpretation of activity in Okean-75. He observes that most of the Soviet forces--particularly aircraft--involved in the exercise operated in areas adjacent to the major oil routes.

3. Another type of interdiction operation is "local" action by smaller countries and terrorists. Captain Bowen views the local interdiction option as less likely, but worries that Cuba, if backed by the USSR, might exploit its position "athwart the oil supply

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route to the US Gulf Coast." The Cuban threat, he warns, is not severe now but "might become more realistic if recent trends in the US-Soviet maritime balance continue."

Commentary

4. In our view, Captain Bowen's paper is flawed by his overemphasis on the importance the Soviets would allocate to severing the oil lines of communication at the outset of a war; by his oversimplification of the Okean activity; and by his failing to consider that Soviet naval forces, like those of the US, would have competing missions which would reduce the forces available for sinking tankers.

5. His statement, for example, that "Soviet capabilities against the oil routes displayed during Okean-75 consisted of land-based aircraft operating from Conakry, Guinea; Havana, Cuba; Hargeisa, Somalia; Aden, South Yemen; and Soviet bases in Siberia" is misleading in several respects:

- The aircraft involved were reconnaissance units, not strike aircraft.
- Siberian-based aircraft would have insufficient range to operate over the principal oil routes.
- The Soviets see the attack submarine as the primary platform for interdicting sea-borne commerce.

6. Captain Bowen errs also in assuming that the Black Sea Fleet, which has few submarines, could play a significant role in an interdiction campaign. Similarly, he assumes that the Pacific Fleet would encounter little opposition "during the battle for the North Atlantic sea lanes," and would deploy task forces, consisting of submarines, surface ships and aircraft,

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into the Indian Ocean to interdict oil shipments. Without foreign basing, Soviet strike aircraft would lack the range to operate effectively in the Indian Ocean. Without air cover, Soviet surface ships would be vulnerable and probably would not be deployed into the Indian Ocean in large numbers.

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Dear Herman:

Thank you for forwarding Captain Bowen's paper on the security of oil supplies transported by sea. It addresses one aspect of an issue--Soviet interdiction of sea lines of communication--which is of great interest to the intelligence community.

*To be part of this information*

While my analysts agree that the Soviets are capable of interdiction they do not believe that interdiction is prominent in Soviet planning for a NATO-Warsaw Pact war. This is a period in which, in our view, the Soviet Navy will almost be totally preoccupied with its strategic missions. *I have a - st. ps*

Our analysts, like yours, have scrutinized Soviet writings and exercise activity. We have noticed that when the Soviets do discuss interdiction it is in the context of a prolonged general war in Europe and focuses on stopping a military supply effort rather than economic shipping. *drifts* *that continues* *+ continues* *in*

We agree with Captain Bowen's conclusion that other ~~third~~<sup>foreign</sup> nations, acting unilaterally, would be unlikely to attempt to disrupt oil shipping. We would also note that there is no evidence that the Soviet Union contemplates backing any minor power, such as Cuba, in this type of activity. *like a* *but does*

Sincerely,

## STANSFIELD TURNER

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7-28-77